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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D. C.

COPY NO. 52

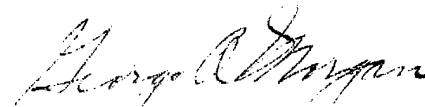
July 28, 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD

SUBJECT: Revision of PSB D-23.

In reference to my memorandum of July 27, 1953, I am now transmitting a copy of the revision of PSB D-23, July 24, 1953, COPY NO. 52, prepared in the Department of State, together with a copy of State's summary. In addition, there are enclosed, for reference:

1. Copy of my memorandum of July 27, COPY NO. 52;
2. Copy of State Department memorandum in connection with State Department proposed draft of PSB D-23 (undated);
3. Copy of memorandum to Mr. Bonsal, PSA, from Ambassador Stanton, dated July 16, 1953.



George A. Morgan
Acting Director

MORI/CDF Pages 1-41 and 43

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WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

July 27, 1953

MEMORANDUM

TO: Psychological Strategy Board

SUBJECT: Revision of PSB D-23

A revision of PSB D-23, prepared in the Department of State as noted at the last Board meeting, will be circulated as soon as it can be mimeographed. At the request of the State Department a statement setting forth the considerations that led to the revision, together with copies of a memorandum by the United States Ambassador to Thailand, are circulated herewith. Since PSB D-23 is still before the NSC, I hope the Board will consider at least the central issues raised by the proposed revision at its meeting on July 29.

To help define those issues, I would like to comment as follows:

1. NSC action No. 788 b directed PSB to prepare a plan for "coordinated psychological operations based on Thailand." If Phase II of PSB D-23 is deleted, the plan becomes simply a plan for Thailand, not for operations based on it. Thus one question is how to handle the proposed change with the NSC.

2. Phase II in PSB D-23 is not laid down as a final decision to act but indicated as a direction for contingency planning and preparation "for utilization of Thailand as a base - when and if conditions permit" (para 3, p. 34). Several of the State comments seem to ignore this distinction. Thus with regard to acceptability to the Thai Government and effects on relations with other Asians and Allies, there is no question of proposing Phase II to any of them until conditions have evolved further along lines indicated in PSB D-23. Also with regard to commitment of non-native forces, the State comment takes no account of the possibility that national policy with regard to VFC may be implemented by the time Phase II is reached. Hence the issue that concerns PSB D-23 is not whether Phase II makes sense under present circumstances but whether it should be adopted as a basis for getting ready to meet probable future circumstances.

3. That Southeast Asia is not a political unity is obvious, but this does not exclude important parts of it from becoming more unified for certain purposes when and if the communist threat spreads and the U.S. injects its partnership as a basis of fresh confidence. Here again, the issue is not the present but the future. If we not only admit the actual dividedness of the area but insist on thinking in no other terms for later on, we play into the hands of communist divisive strategy. It is not a question of aiming at 100% unity in Phase II. The idea would be to radiate moral as well as material strength outward from the Thai base as far and fast as it will go.

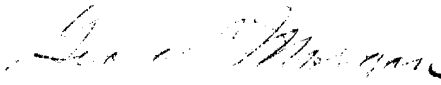
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4. In respect to the Ambassador's comment on economic aid it should be noted (para (5) p. 30) that the main recommendation is for maintenance of economic aid and technical assistance programs "at least at the present scale", in order to avoid the obvious contradictions resulting from any decrease in such programs. It is also intended (para (5) (c) p. 30) specifically to aid in development of Northeastern Thailand, a point mentioned as desirable in the Ambassador's memorandum.

5. PSB D-23 does not commit us to any fixed view of prospects in Indochina (para 2, p. 25, para 6, p. 26). If the main free-world effort remains there, it is still important to strengthen the Thai flank.


George A. Morgan
Acting Director

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NSC redaction

STATE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM IN CONNECTION WITH STATE

DEPARTMENT PROPOSED DRAFT OF PSB D-23

The State Department proposed draft of PSB D-23 is based on the Department's objections to Phase II of PSB D-23 and upon a memorandum from Ambassador Edwin F. Stanton, copy attached, which strongly supported the Department's objections and provided additional information and reason.

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July 16, 1953

PSA - Mr. Bonsal

PSA - Edwin F. Stanton

PSB D-23. "U.S. Psychological Strategy with Respect to the Thai Peoples of Southeast Asia."

Having perused the above mentioned paper, I would endorse "Phase I", which proposes in coordination with U.S. military programs, to consolidate Thailand as a secure base, by increasing its strength and making its frontiers more defensible. This, in essence, is what the U.S. Government has been doing in Thailand during the past two and one-half years through the extension of military and economic assistance to Thailand [REDACTED]

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With respect to a military assistance program, I believe that the Thai economy and finances will not support any great increase in the military aid which has been planned and which is now in process of being implemented. Every effort should be made, however, to expedite shipment of military equipment which has been programmed, particularly artillery, and to assign without delay the additional personnel requested by MAAG, Thailand, in order to expedite the training of the Thai Armed Forces. The assistance being extended by our Government to the Thai Police should not be overlooked. To meet the threat to Thailand's frontiers occasioned by the Communist invasion of Laos, the strength of the Thai Police is being increased by some 5,000 men, [REDACTED]

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With respect to our economic aid, I feel, on the basis of conversations with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and other members of the Cabinet, that the Thai Government does not desire any great increase over and above the level of aid which has been extended during the past two years. In fact, the Thai Government finds the setting aside of counterpart funds a very considerable burden and is an obligation which it would like our Government to waive. I believe, therefore, that it would not be advisable to increase economic aid except for such emergency projects in north-eastern Thailand as may be agreed upon. It should be borne in mind that the economic assistance which we have extended to Thailand is not of such a nature as materially to lessen the financial burdens incurred by the Thai Government in connection with expenditures for military purposes. The only exception to the foregoing is the assistance which MSA can give with respect to highways.

The psychological objectives listed under "Phase I" have also received a great deal of attention and through information programs, [REDACTED] the dangers of Communism have been brought home to the Thai people and their will to resist either Communist aggression or Communist blandishments has been stimulated. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

accomplished by the extension of informational activities to the provinces. However, this can only be achieved through an increase of personnel, preferably personnel having at least a basic knowledge of the Thai language, and through increased appropriations.

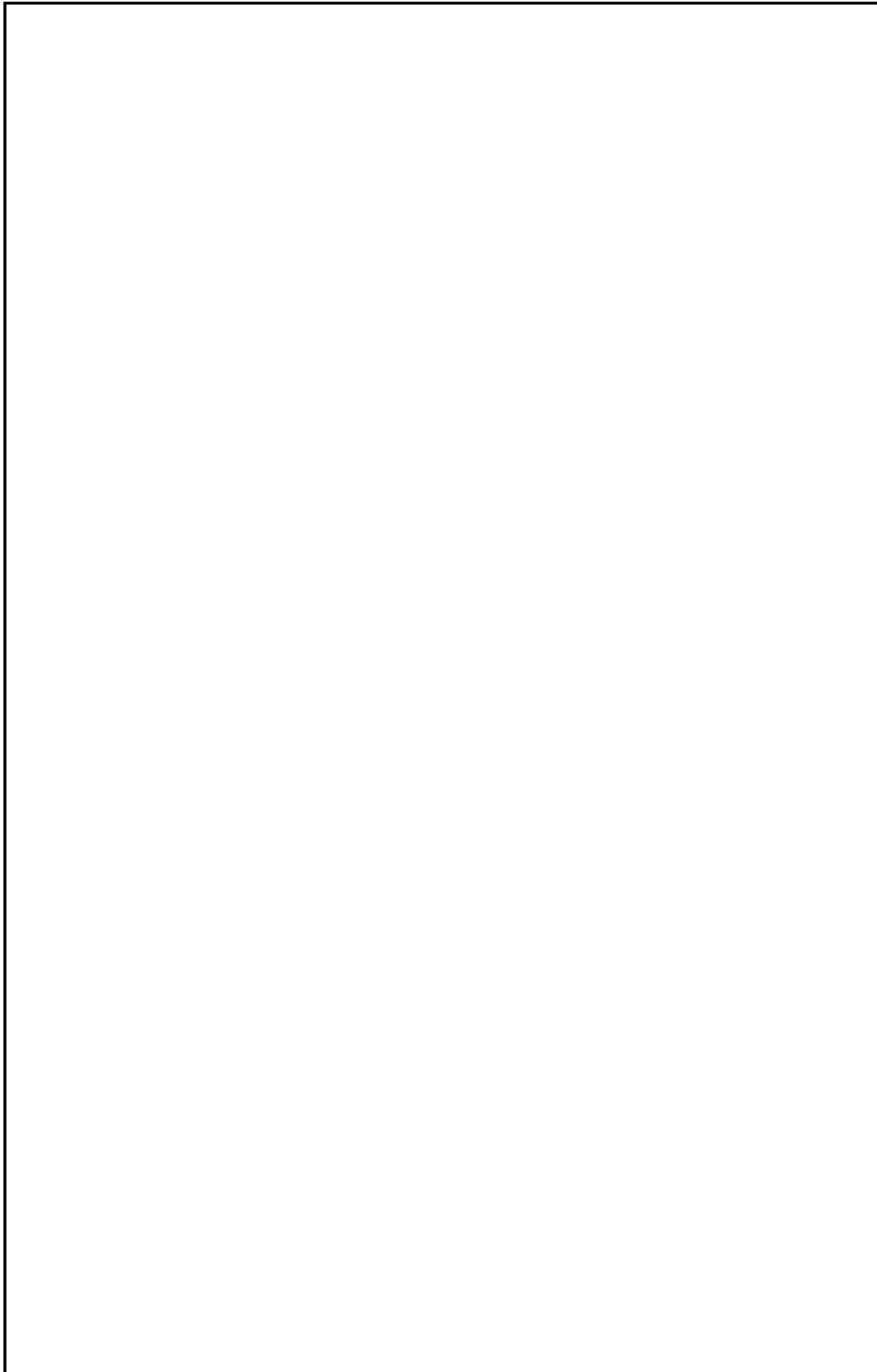
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Draft
July 24, 1953SECURITY INFORMATION
TOP SECRETSUMMARY OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE REVISION OF PSF D-23,
"U. S. PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO THE
THAI PEOPLES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA"I. Mission

To determine the psychological implications and consequences of communist strategy in Southeast Asia, and to establish a sound U. S. psychological strategy in the area with respect to the Thai peoples of Southeast Asia.

II. Conclusions

1. That communist expansionist activity in Southeast Asia is growing in strength and potency. Developments in communist strategy in the Thai ethnic area pose an imminent threat to Thailand, which must be met rapidly with an effective political-psychological military counter effort, or Southeast Asia could fall to the communists without overt intervention by the Chinese Communist armed forces.

2. That Thailand is politically and geographically the most suitable Thai ethnic base in which to initiate and develop a substantial counter effort.

3. That Thailand's economy, basically agricultural, is at present strained by measures necessary for the national security. This situation, occurring at a time when increased communist pressure is imminent, calls for economic aid programs at the levels of the several years past at least,

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Summary Draft
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to support beneficial long-range projects, and to reduce the danger of dissidence in the Northeast.

4. That the ethnic bonds of the Thai peoples scattered through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Southern China can contribute to the psychological and military effort to prevent communist expansion.

5. That U. S. support and activation of a Thailand-based counter effort must utilize and exploit fully the normal channels of contact with native elements by placing highly qualified individuals in important posts in Thailand and utilizing every phase and form of psychological warfare to prepare the minds and emotions of the people to collaborate in the effort; that this support must relate to synchronized efforts including extensive para-military operations.

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6. That a coordinated political effort to bring French policy towards Indochina more in accord with the realities of the situation must be considered a major factor in the overall effectiveness of the resistance effort based in Thailand while expanded U. S. programs for strengthening Thailand could assist in making this effort more effective.

7. That the proposed expansion of U. S. activities based on Thailand is feasible in the light of that country's capabilities, providing emphasis is placed initially on reducing Thailand's vulnerabilities.

Consequently, programs should be aimed at strengthening Thailand's ability to resist communist aggression or subversion, with only such necessary supporting programs in the information field in adjacent areas as are consistent with the existing patterns of inter-Allied relationships.

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III. Proposed Psychological Strategy Plan

1. In coordination with U. S. military programs, consolidate Thailand as a secure base, by increasing its strength and making its frontiers more defensible.

a. Psychological Objectives

(1) Stimulate, crystallize, maintain, and coordinate the active resistance in Thailand to communist aggression, subversion, and oppression.

(2) Throughout all of Southeast Asia maximize the favorable aspects, and minimize any unfavorable aspect, of U.S. support to Thailand.

(3) Encourage and strengthen all feasible cooperation among the countries of Southeast Asia with each other and with the British and French, and of both the former and the latter with the U.S.

b. Basic Tasks

(1) Wherever possible in cooperation with the Thai Government and making use chiefly of indigenous outlets, develop or expand U.S. overt information programs directed to Southeast Asia, with initial emphasis on those aimed at Thailand and other Thai ethnic groups.

(2) Stimulate and support effective overt and covert information activities of the Thai Government in support of objectives compatible with National Policy. ^{25X1}

(3) Develop, expand, or intensify U.S. activities in support of all of the objectives in National Policy.

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(4) Develop, expand, and accelerate to the greatest extent sound programs for the creation and employment of indigenous guerrilla and para-military forces capable of effective active defense against communist invasion and infiltration of Thailand.

(5) Maintain at least at the present scale, and possibly increase beyond the FY '52 and FY '53 level, the economic aid and technical assistance program.

(6) Strengthen and make obligatory educational courses for all official U.S. personnel, designed to give them a background of the history, culture and languages within which they will work in Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.

(7) Strengthen orientation programs for indigenous military personnel, and suitable information programs for the general public, taking into account local cultural attitudes.

(8) Tactfully, and on a realistic basis, induce the Thai Government to carry out measures intended to reduce Thai vulnerabilities to communist subversion.

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July 24, 1953

PROPOSED REVISION BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PSB D-23

U. S. PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO THE
THAI PEOPLES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

I. MISSION

To determine the psychological implications and consequences of communist strategy in Southeast Asia, and to establish a sound U.S. psychological strategy in the area with respect to the Thai peoples of Southeast Asia.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

1. Analysis of Communist Strategy

a. Evolution of communist strategy in Southeast Asia since the beginning of 1953 has introduced a new and dangerous element into the chronic problems of this unsettled area. From a long-term viewpoint a particularly significant development has been the setting up in January 1953 of a "Thai Autonomous Area" in a portion of Yunnan Province, roughly half the population of which is Thai. This move almost certainly indicates on the part of communist strategists an intent to manipulate and subvert -- and perhaps a hope ultimately to dominate -- all of the Thai peoples. There are approximately 35,000,000 human beings of Thai or closely related ethnic origin -- including nearly 20,000,000 in Thailand itself -- scattered throughout Southeast Asia, with strategically significant concentrations of them in Indochina, Burma, and China, as well as Thailand. The pattern of ethnic distribution is such that if the communist Pan-Thai strategy were successful the communist forces could easily turn the French position in Vietnam, and from Thailand as central base, attack either Burma or Vietnam from the rear, while

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seriously threatening the British position in Malaya. Apart from the possibilities of large-scale military action, the new communist strategy could achieve success more gradually by a steady infiltration and subversion of all the Thai territories, accompanied by guerrilla raids and political pressures aimed at undermining the free governments in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. This is probably the most dangerous aspect of the strategy.

b. The Vietminh invasion of Laos graphically illustrates the threat in Southeast Asia. Regardless of the immediate military outcome in Laos, the communist forces there have achieved some important results. The most significant one is to have established in Laos a base for further military, para-military, and subversive attacks. Another valuable result, from the communist point of view, is to have demonstrated, both to the native populations and to the French, an inherent weakness of the French defensive position in Indochina, namely that while the French can successfully defend any chosen position, they have difficulty in depriving their adversaries of the initiative. Even if the Vietminh forces withdraw completely from Laos, they have demonstrated how easily they can enter it at will, and in setting up a "Free Laos" government they have signified an intention to expand or resume the invasion later.

c. The immediacy of the threat to Thailand depends in part on the degree of military and political success achieved by the Vietminh in Laos, but even if the border areas of the neighboring state are effectively cleared of communist influence, it remains serious. For the time being it is largely psycho-political, and still in the probing stage. It will

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recede only slightly as communist power withdraws from its border, and increase very sharply as it returns again. The threat will grow in proportion to inability of French Union forces to cope with it successfully, and if the Vietminh in any future military action is able to create a sufficiently strong impression of irresistible surge, of "invincibility", many influential Thai will be tempted to seek some accommodation with the enemy. The danger that the communists may subvert non-communist opposition elements and ambitious careerists in Thailand is particularly grave if -- as some reports suggest -- the exiled leader of the opposition, Pridi Phanomyong, is now living in Communist China and collaborating with the "Free Thai" leaders. The internal situation in Thailand is further aggravated by the presence of a strong communist movement in Thailand's large Chinese community.

d. In summary, it seems evident that the flexible, many-sided but coherent communist strategy represents a very serious threat to the tribes and nations of the Thai ethnic group, including Laos and Cambodia, which occupy the heartland of Southeast Asia. This threat would be re-enforced by communist progress in Vietnam or Burma and can be politically and logistically supported from bases in Chinese territory. Similarly, its political and its military aspects are mutually reinforcing. The physical characteristics of most non-coastal parts of Southeast Asia are such that small groups of lightly armed guerrillas, living off the country, can effectively harass numerically and technologically superior forces. To the extent that this constant harassment is successful it weakens the morale of the forces seeking to preserve law and order, thus diminishing their effectiveness at the same time that it lowers their prestige and authority in the eyes of the local population, thus facilitating the recruitment of new guerrilla bands. If the vicious circle of psychological

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harassment reaches a point at which it is constantly increasing communist capabilities for psychological harassment it is likely to spell the doom of Western, or Western-oriented, politico-military control in Southeast Asia unless it can somehow be broken. On the other hand it also constitutes a potential communist vulnerability, for any expression of authentic indigenous and popular resistance to communism by counter-guerrilla bands or even by village militia forces would have adverse effects on communist morale and prestige out of all proportion to its military significance.

2. Determination of U.S. Counter-Strategy

a. In the face of the communist strategy for Southeast Asia outlined in the foregoing section, it is clearly essential for the West to develop an equally vigorous, flexible and coherent counter-strategy. Therefore a more vigorous exercise of U.S. leadership is the first requirement for a successful anti-communist strategy in Southeast Asia. (This does not imply that there should necessarily be a more apparent exercising of U.S. leadership; we should continue to work with and through indigenous leadership whenever possible.)

b. Like the present communist strategy, the proposed new strategy must include military, economic, political and psychological programs. Not only must a major effort be made in all these fields, but the several efforts must be mutually reinforcing. Insofar as a priority of effort is indicated, it is in the politico-psychological field where the communist threat is greatest. The most urgent single need is to create an atmosphere of victory. Of nearly equal importance is the requirement for the Western powers to demonstrate convincingly to the indigenous peoples that the colonial era is dead. This includes giving greater recognition to the nationalist aspirations of the native elites but it is

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a handicap for us to deal with Asian nationalism solely through the urbanized, westernized, upper and middle classes. We must learn eventually to associate ourselves with Asian nationalism, as the communists do, at the village level, though shortage of qualified personnel makes this difficult at the present time. In particular we must meet the communist military threat at the village level by developing local resistance forces, and guerrilla bases. Finally, while intensifying the struggle against communism everywhere in Southeast Asia, we should focus our efforts upon the Thai area because it is at the same time a region vulnerable to the communist effort, and a good base for counter-attack, against the communist position.

c. It is obviously indispensable for the U.S. to maintain Thailand, the central core of the Thai ethnic group, geographically the logical base for counter operations against the communists, and the glacis of the British position on the Kra Isthmus, as an anti-communist bastion in Southeast Asia. This implies strengthening the French effort in Indochina, particularly in Laos and Cambodia, but cannot be achieved solely by such means. Equally intensive but differently oriented U.S. programs must be developed both in Indochina and in Thailand itself, and if the effort in Thailand is adequate to meet the communist challenge locally, it will tend to generate a new U.S. capability for stimulating and assisting the French in Indochina, for injecting new vigor into the struggle against communism throughout Southeast Asia; in other words, a successful development by the U.S. of the potentialities of the Thailand position would not only strengthen the defense of Malaya and Indochina but would enable us to outflank the Vietminh position.

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The process of development outlined above includes such activities as are necessary to consolidate Thailand as a secure base by increasing its strength and making its frontiers more defensible. Thailand should be considered the principal geographical base of the proposed U.S. strategy with respect to the Thai peoples of Southeast Asia, and the central concept of this strategy should be the development in Thailand of programs which gradually create a climate of victory. In the light of the requirements set forth in paragraphs a. and b. above, Thailand is the logical -- in fact the only possible -- focus of the integrated, offensively-defensive U.S. strategy needed to defeat communist designs aimed against the Thai peoples in Southeast Asia.

d. Vigorous and coordinated U.S. psychological, political, economic and military programs in Thailand, developed in accordance with the offensive-defensive concept expressed in paragraph c., would have the following major advantages:

(1) Even if modest in terms of equipment and American personnel, they would create the impression that the United States is determined not to abandon Southeast Asia to the communists.

(2) More active U.S. leadership in Thailand will tend to raise the morale of non-communist indigenous nationalist elements in other Thai ethnic areas such as Laos and Cambodia -- because it will suggest the possibility of greater U.S. support.

(3) By sponsoring a dynamic politico-military guerrilla movement, the U.S. would have created a strong potential for resisting communist forces with minimal expenditures of western manpower. Even in the event of a large-scale Chinese invasion,

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guerrilla harassment might prove a significant factor in slowing down the invaders, preventing them from making the most economical use of their manpower, and above all in crystallizing and maintaining the resistance of the local populations.

(4) The obvious need to coordinate U.S. military, para-military and psychological programs for the defense of Thailand with similar British and French programs in the area creates a possibility of exerting greatly increased U.S. influence over the French conduct of their struggle against communism in Indochina. This influence would be psychological for the most part and would result from the overt pronouncements necessary to prepare the indigenous people to accept U.S. support in good faith. France could not reasonably refrain from modifying her policy toward Indochina under the circumstances.

e. There appear to be no unqualified disadvantages inherent in the proposed U.S. strategy based upon Thailand, but there are risks of implementing the strategy in an ultimately self-defeating manner which should be recognized so that they can be avoided or reduced. The main ones are as follows:

(1) Generating British and French suspicions that U.S. programs in Southeast Asia are a cloak for U.S. "ambitions" detrimental to their interests.

(2) Generating similar suspicions of U.S. "imperialism" on the part of extreme Asian nationalists.

(3) Creating expectations on the part of some indigenous elements, particularly the Pan-Thai enthusiasts in Thailand, that the U.S. can be induced to support

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extreme, unreasonable or premature nationalist ambitions detrimental to the legitimate interests of our Allies or of other friendly nations.

(4) Providing pretexts for either the French or the Thai to relax their own efforts against communism and to throw the whole burden for the defense of South-east Asia on the United States, this to include leading the Thai to rely on the ultimate commitment of U.S. military forces in Thailand.

(5) Founding misplaced hopes upon Thai military capabilities, or attempting to impose patterns of military development upon the Thai armed forces which are not adapted to their cultural and social environment. (For an analysis of social and cultural factors affecting Thai military capabilities, see III. 2. c. below.)

(6) Fostering only disappointment in U.S. official and unofficial circles in the event that U.S. and Thai interests diverge at a future date, with the result that use of the forces created and activated in line with this strategy are misused or abused, seen from the U.S. viewpoint. This is a real and major danger, especially in terms of U.S. public opinion, requiring both vigilance and adroitness in U.S. diplomacy to avoid putting the U.S. "over the barrel", i.e., use of the U.S. commitment, taken as a right or a favor by the recipient, against the U.S. as leverage for condoning actions not in the U.S. interest.

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(7) Launching uncontrollable forces, or otherwise creating harmful political situations, through the large-scale employment of indigenous guerrilla forces. Since the proposed strategy is based in great part upon development of a large-scale indigenous resistance to communism at the village level, this hazard is a considerable one, particularly in the light of past history. While the United States achieved some remarkable tactical successes in the development and employment of native guerrilla forces in World War II, both in the China and the India-Burma theaters (the military record of the OSS-sponsored Kachin Rangers was particularly outstanding), the long-range effects of such operations in Asia and elsewhere have often proved harmful to the national interests of the powers sponsoring them. Careful planning can mitigate but may not entirely eliminate such adverse results. In any case the risks should be considered acceptable on the basis that there is no feasible and more acceptable alternative.

NSC and USIA

f. In conclusion, it appears from the considerations in the foregoing paragraphs, that the United States can and should meet the threat of communist strategy aimed at the Thai peoples in Southeast Asia by vigorous coordinated programs, primarily focussed on Thailand

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III. CAPABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THAILAND

1. General Survey

a. U.S. programs to implement the conclusions of Section II must take into account both the general character of the country and its

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specific assets and liabilities from the viewpoint of such programs.

The most pertinent general characteristics can be summarized as follows:

(1) The population of Thailand in mid-1953 is estimated at just under 20,000,000. Of this approximately 15 percent (about 3,000,000) are Chinese.

(2) The literacy rate is estimated at between 30 and 40 percent, which is relatively very high for Asia.

(3) The Thai economy, which is largely agricultural, is basically sound. Hunger and other forms of misery are negligible as factors forming the growth of communism. However, for the first time in years the Thai balance of payments became distinctly unfavorable in 1952, due principally to a steep decline in the proceeds from the export of rubber and tin which, together with rice, are Thailand's chief export commodities. Indications are that the balance of payments will remain unfavorable in the foreseeable future. The national budget, moreover, has shown increasingly serious deficits in recent years due to necessary and entirely justifiable expenditures for defense, economic development and salary increases for underpaid civil servants. Additional expenditures for the armed forces, the police, the evacuation of refugees, etc., required as a result of the newly intensified communist threat in Laos will now lead to an even greater deficit in 1953 than was originally estimated. It should also be noted that the particularly exposed Northeastern provinces bordering on Laos are under-developed and constitute an economic depression area. A second economic

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depression area is developing in the tin and rubber producing southern provinces situated in the Malayan peninsula.

(4) Railroad and highway communications systems, while still inadequate for economic and military purposes, were sufficient to sustain large-scale movements of Japanese troops and supplies into Burma and Malaya in World War II. They are supplemented by an extensive system of waterways. Bangkok has a good all-weather airport, and there are a number of smaller military airports through the country.

(5) Except for the Chinese community which is chiefly centered in the cities and larger towns and in the Bangkok area, the population is culturally fairly homogenous. The northern and northeastern parts of the country are largely peopled by Lao whose level of sophistication and whose language, which is a Thai dialect, are comparable to those of their kinsmen in Laos, in the Shan States of Burma and in southern Yunnan. Despite poor communications the central Government has for a long time carried on effective administration in all parts of the Kingdom, and although there has been occasional banditry there has been no large-scale armed opposition such as in Burma.

(6) During the period of colonial expansion Thailand never fell under European domination as it succeeded in balancing the various Western powers which encroached on her borders. British and French influences in the

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economic and legal fields, however, became very strong leaving the Thai with strong suspicion of British and French intentions and a profound dislike of the French in particular. Thai feelings toward the United States have been friendly and at present Thai-U.S. relations are more intimate than at any time previously. The Thai have a deeply rooted sense of identity with King, religion and country, which is a unifying force and which provides them with an inner toughness which has enabled them to withstand the vicissitudes of modern politico-economic stresses. Before World War II the Thai Government was irredentist and for a brief period the Thai dreamed of unifying areas of Laos, Cambodia, the Shan States of Burma and of Malaya in a greater Thailand. Some of these dreams were fulfilled by Japanese support for the duration of the War. There was little evidence of national mourning or resentment, however, when the Allies forced Thailand to disgorge the fruits of these aggressions after the War.

(7) Thailand has a government which in form has the principal characteristics of a democratic constitutional monarchy. However, these instruments of government are used in a traditional authoritarian manner by the ruling class which is successfully perpetuating a one-party form of government. Attempts at coups d'etat have been frequent as actual changes of the personnel in power are only possible by a show of force in spite of the fact of occasional general elections. None of these attempts has been successful since November 1947 and there is no

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reason to believe that any attempts will be successful in the near future unless they have the benefit of foreign military support. Although the Crown rests uneasy the present government appears to be comparatively stable, the present Prime Minister having exerted direct or indirect control for about eleven of the 21 years of the constitutional regime, five and one-half of these years being under his present term of control. Within the ruling group there is constant jockeying for position and personal advantage among the more prominent individuals heading up power components of the government.

2. Special Political, Social and Cultural Factors

a. U.S. relations with Thailand's various governments have been generally good. During transitions of power in Thailand the U.S. Government has refrained from becoming involved in Thailand's internal politics. During World War II when the then Prime Minister Phibun Songgram was technically an ally of the Japanese and had declared war on the United States, the U.S. Government did not retaliate with a similar declaration of war being convinced that Thailand's declaration did not represent the sentiments of the Thai nation. During the War the U.S. Government conceived and directed an underground intelligence movement led by Pridi Phanomyong who was then Regent. Before the end of the War the Regent engaged in a typical Thai political effort having the benefit of a wealth of American-supplied arms and forced the Government of Phibun Songgram to fall, using the occasion of a parliamentary vote of non-confidence in order to prevent interference by the Japanese, an interference which neither Phibun nor Pridi desired. Pridi continued until November 1947 as the real power behind the Government when Phibun, who had reassembled his prewar forces in a new pattern, succeeded in again seizing political power by a coup d'etat and forced Pridi into exile. The U.S. Government withheld

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recognition until the new regime was able to go through certain processes of a constitutional sort, including the acceptance of a new constitution to suit the occasion and a general election. Repeated efforts have been made by Pridi and his "Free Thai" followers to reassert their control over the Government but without success. As the years continue to pass it has become increasingly manifest that Pridi and his followers can only hope to return to power if they have substantial foreign military backing.

In view of the current struggle between the communist nations and the free world Pridi's handicaps for a political return have increased. The fact that Pridi is believed by the Thai to be in China and to have inspired the recent developments of a communist nature in Sibsong-Panna (Yunnan) and in Laos further disqualifies him for a return to Thailand under present conditions. Pridi's personal position is further made difficult by the fact that most Thai accept the idea that he was in some way responsible for the murder of King Ananda.

There are other anti-Government elements in Thailand which are friendly with the Royal Family and which would probably prefer an administration which administered by constitutional and democratic methods. However, there seems little prospect of these elements bearing any political weight at present.

In spite of apparent shortcomings in Thailand's Government from an American point of view, the Government appears to be acceptable to the general Thai population. Furthermore, the U.S. Government is receiving from Thailand most, if not all, of the varieties of cooperation and assistance which it desires and which it is possible for the Thai Government to deliver. The Thai Government has taken a forthright stand against communism, has provided armed forces in Korea, has voted with the U.S. on all major issues in the United Nations and is prepared to make what combat stand it is

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capable of against communist armed aggression. It is believed that the Thai Government would be prepared to cooperate in further reasonable suggestions, some of which are envisaged in this paper, to strengthen its stand against communism.

b. There is a strong communist movement in the Chinese community possible including 2,000 or more skilled and trained communists with a following of perhaps another 20,000 communists in the total community of about 3 million. The Thai communist movement is small and not vital although it might become energized if communist forces appeared likely to exert fatal pressures upon the Thai Government. The Chinese communists dominate what little trade-union activity there is in the country, and are particularly well entrenched among maritime workers and river men. The Thai Government and Chinese community have been locked in a struggle since 1939 wherein the Chinese aim to survive as Chinese and the Thai aim to absorb them or to eliminate them. The sharpness of the struggle was brought about by the fact that the Chinese had a stranglehold on the petty trade of the nation as well as of a large part of the major industries, and at the same time were decelerating their normal absorption into the Thai community by the strengthening of Chinese schools, Chinese newspapers and Chinese clubs. The efforts of the Thai to control all aspects of Chinese cultural and economic activities has aroused a great deal of friction. The U.S. Government has attempted to remain clear of this internal Thai problem and on the one occasion when the Chinese Nationalist Government asked for U.S. assistance in securing better treatment for the Chinese in Thailand, the U.S. Government took the position that it was sympathetic with the Thai Government which was faced with a burgeoning minorities problem which seemed to have no ready solution.

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c. While not systematically anti-foreign and though they are generally well-disposed towards Americans, the Thai have a great deal of pride and are about as quick to resent a patronizing or arrogant attitude on the part of Westerners as other Asians. "Face" plays an important role in Thailand, as in most Asian societies, but the Thai concept of "face" is highly sophisticated and is paradoxically allied with their sense of humor and ridicule. They intensely dislike arrogance, pomposity, sanctimoniousness, rudeness and inability to control one's temper.

In moral and religious matters the Thai are formally Buddhists, ceremonially Hindus and practically, for everyday living, spirit worshippers. From their Buddhism they derive an ideology of lofty moral perfection which is sought by a few of the Monks. Buddhism also emphasizes the shortcomings and imperfections of all human beings, and consequently the Thai are not surprised at evidences of greed, corruption, graft, mal-administration and the other inadequacies of human society, though they may aspire mildly to a better order of things. The graft which is commonplace among high Thai officials and which is lamented by Westerners is a hangover in the thinking of the Thai from the sumptuary privilege of the Royal Family, the ruling class. High office carried with it certain perquisites and opportunities for personal aggrandizement. The most that can be hoped for in improving this situation in the near future is for the new ruling class to reacquire a monopoly on it and to require the lesser officials and general public to relinquish whatever amounts they have been taking. There is no possibility of eliminating graft as long as the Thai Government continues to be an authoritarian one-party government, but discreet and realistically-oriented U.S. pressure can be useful in inducing the Thai Government to carry out measures intended to reduce Thai vulnerabilities to communist subversion in order to retain for the free world the confidence of certain

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westernized Thai who might otherwise be lured into the communist camp by propaganda attacking the corruption of the Phibun regime.

The Thai national character -- insofar as any such broad generalization can be valid -- conveys an impression of a people who are gentle and light-minded, not given to ponderous philosophic thought nor to great warlike and military ambitions. It is certainly true that the constant Buddhist teaching against destroying life has had the effect of

DOS and NSC softening the Thai warlike spirit of earlier centuries. Nevertheless, the

Thai

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know how to accept hardship and even death when they feel

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impelled to do so.

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This is perhaps a symptom of their love of intrigue and

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of their inclination to form small groups about powerful or important individuals. The Thai are incorrigible individualists, there being no more individualistic person in the world than the Thai villager who resents regimentation and likes to live his life in a free and independent manner. When organized into military organizations the Thai do respond well to training. In Korea Thai troops have behaved satisfactorily under fire and their casualty rate has been high. Observers of guerrilla training report that the Thai who were selected for such training responded well and developed into very efficient guerrilla units. It seems probable that Thai character and cultural institutions are better suited to guerrilla activities than to the development on a large-scale of conventional military forces, but this by no means rules out the possibility of training selected small or medium-sized units, and certain categories of military personnel, to a high level of efficiency.

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d. Great care should be taken in the selection of U. S. official personnel for duty in Thailand. It seems essential to provide men not only of technical skill, energy and moral integrity able to win the respect of the Thai but also men who have no sense of racial or color superiority who are tactful, peaceful, cheerful, tolerant, and sensitive in their human relations, warmly human. The Thai do not get on well with people who are of cold and aloof personality. They make good friends easily with persons who treat them as equals. The success of U. S. programs in Thailand depends heavily on the selection of high-class U. S. field personnel and perhaps the extent and diversity of our programs should be limited more by our selection of desirable personnel than by any other factor. Americans who had close relations with the Pridi regime during and shortly after the War, even though of high caliber and of proven ability, suffer the obvious handicap of being identified in the minds of the current Thai Government with their principal political opposition. It is probable that any such Americans who returned to

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Thailand would be under constant suspicion of trying to favor Pridi and his followers to the detriment of the Government.

3. Capabilities of Thailand

a. Communications: The principal radio broadcasting facilities in the country are controlled by the Government. The existing transmitters are low powered; they will soon (date unspecified but estimated June, 1953) be supplemented by a 50 KW short-wave station now being constructed by the Government. On the receiving side there are 92,295 licensed sets, 4,295 of which are public, i. e., for use in public squares and market places. There is no indication of geographic distribution, though most are undoubtedly in Bangkok.

The press is characterized by irresponsibility and frequent changes. Most daily newspapers average 1,000 to 2,000 circulation, with 8,000 to 10,000 maximum figure. An estimate of 50,000 may be made for total national circulation. Newspapers, confined to Bangkok and Chiangmai, are in Thai, Chinese and English (2 English dailies, and 1 weekly, all in Bangkok). Some have known sponsorship or control, as the Director-General of Police, Communist Party, etc. Thai language magazines are numerous and varied, many feature translations from English.

The Thai Government has a small Information Department. It has excellent arrangements for distribution of posters and other materials through Buddhist priests and temples.

b. Armed Forces: Of the approximately 100,000 men in the Thai Armed Forces, 35,000-40,000 are in the Army, about 40,000 in the National Police, and between 15,000-20,000 are in the Thai Navy and Air Force; their equipment is generally obsolete and frequently unusable due

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to lack of ammunition and parts. The Air Force has 316 planes, mostly obsolete and many of which are in poor condition.

The Thai Department of Defense has set up a Psychological Warfare Section, after a survey by the FECOM Chief of Psywar Section; other instruction has been given Thai officers in Tokyo and at Ft. Bragg.

The Thai Police Force is under the Home Ministry and controlled by Police General Phao. It operates an Anti-Communist Propaganda Section, and is responsible for frontier security and internal security in both urban and rural areas.

c. Conclusions: While Thailand has some useful capabilities for psychological and para-military programs, her Armed Forces, despite increased U.S. assistance, and even if supplemented by large-scale para-military programs, appear to be inadequate to assure the defense of the Kingdom within the near future against a major communist military attack. Failure to convince the Thai military authorities that some western assistance, at least in the air, would be rapidly forthcoming in case of such attack, might vitiate the whole program. If it is not considered feasible to ear-mark some U. S. air-strength for the defense of Thailand in case of need, then there is an urgent need to develop outside Thailand an international volunteer force comparable to the wartime "Flying Tigers" which could intervene in Thailand. Unless opposed by jets, this force could make effective use of World War II fighter-bombers by applying the techniques developed by the USAF and the AVG for use against ground troops.*

* The conclusions of SE-45, June 2, 1953, entitled "Thailand's Ability to Withstand Communist Pressures or Attacks through mid-1954" are reproduced in Annex A.

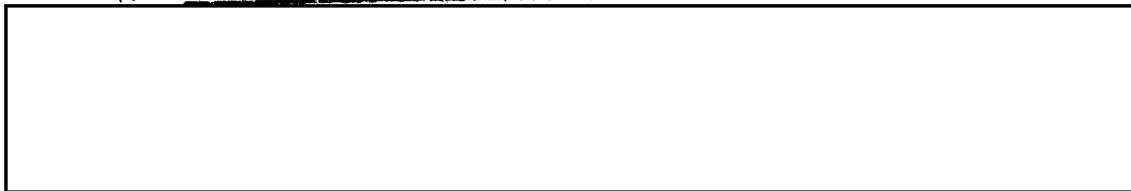
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25X1 4. U. S. Capabilities in Thailand



b. Official representation: There are 245 Americans in Thailand (not including scheduled increases in MSA personnel), consisting of:

Diplomatic Mission	96
MAAG	97
MSA	32
USIS	20

USIS operates in Bangkok, Chiangmai, and Songkla, and through the Thai and Chinese press, pamphlets, exhibits, fairs, motion pictures and radio. Exchange of Persons is also handled under the direction of the PAO, and by MSA.

As in other Southeast Asian countries, the Regional Production Center in Manila provides support with its extensive facilities.

VOA Thai language programs originate in New York and are relayed by Manila. Although recent economy moves resulted in orders for their elimination, they have now been extended indefinitely.

c. Capabilities elsewhere in the area: In the neighboring countries, Burma, Malaya, Laos, and Cambodia, USIS in particular has facilities and personnel which are capable of closer integration with programs aimed primarily at Thailand but having an effect on or related to its neighbors. For example, educated Laotians, other than products of French universities, have almost all attended universities in Bangkok, thus providing a direct cultural link.

d. The MSA program in Thailand, according to the figures scheduled for June 30, 1953, employs about one hundred Americans, of whom 29 are administrative and the balance in operational work. The latter

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category may be broken down as follows:

Public Health	19
Agriculture	25
Transportation	6
Industry	1
Education	18
Public Administration	2

In the past, certain adjustments have occurred to the expressed desires of the Thai Government; among the recent ones is the addition of the public administration specialists.

The reduction of U. S. economic aid to Thailand from \$7 million in FY '52 to \$6.2 million in FY '53, and the planned further reduction to \$5 million in FY '54 cannot fail to reduce U. S. capabilities in the economic field. Even should Thai reaction to this reduction of U. S. economic assistance be less pronounced than there is reason to fear, a U. S. policy of "retrenchment" will certainly not strengthen the Thai resolve to continue as an anti-communist bastion in a communist pressure area, but on the contrary, increase their fear for the future and create a lingering feeling of doubt and uncertainty. In order to demonstrate tangibly our firm intention to stand by Thailand in her hour of need, it is important that a modest increase in economic aid be made in FY '54 as compared to previous years, and it is essential, at the very least, that no decrease below the FY '53 program take place.

e. Conclusions: If the economic and military aid programs are strengthened as suggested, U. S. capabilities for carrying out the new programs required by the situation in Southeast Asia appear to be adequate, with a few exceptions. The U. S. Mission in Bangkok, is an able one. On the other hand, the proposed development of Thailand requires the assignment there of some suitably-qualified and outstanding Americans

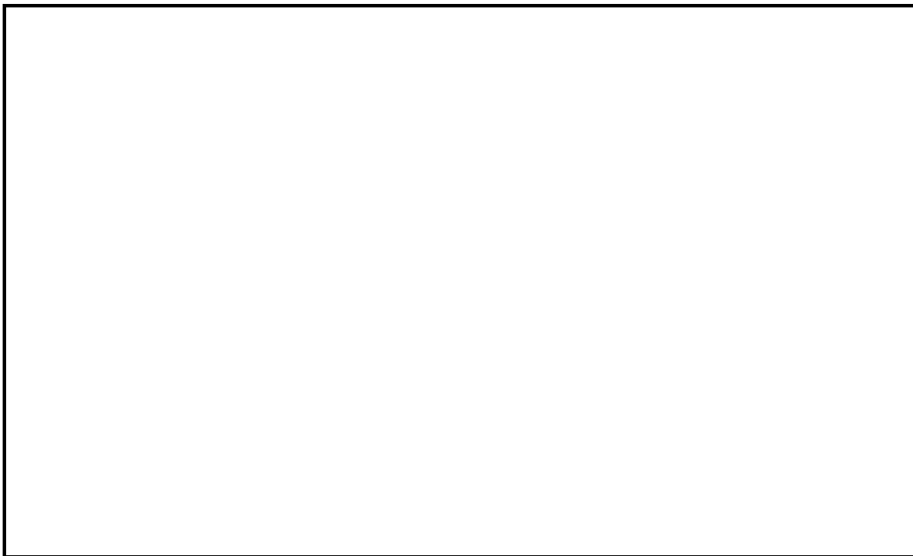
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to fill certain key posts. The most essential requirements appear to be the following:

(1) A public affairs officer of sufficient experience and seniority to be effective in promoting highly effective U. S. information programs and in coordinating them with similar officers in adjacent countries and with the responsible Thai officials.



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IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. That communist expansionist activity in Southeast Asia is growing in strength and potency. Developments in communist strategy in the Thai ethnic area pose an imminent threat to Thailand, which must be met rapidly with an effective political-psychological military counter effort, or Southeast Asia could fall to the communists without overt intervention by the Chinese Communist armed forces.
2. That Thailand is politically and geographically the most suitable Thai ethnic base in which to initiate and develop a substantial counter effort.
3. That Thailand's economy, basically agricultural, is at present strained by measures necessary for the national security. This situation occurring at a time when increased communist pressure is imminent, calls for economic aid programs at the levels of the several years past at least, to support beneficial long-range projects, and to reduce the danger of dissidence in the Northeast.
4. That the ethnic bonds of the Thai peoples scattered through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Southern China can contribute to the psychological and military effort to prevent communist expansion.
5. That U. S. support and activation of a Thailand based counter effort must utilize and exploit fully the normal channels of contact with native elements by placing highly qualified individuals in important posts in Thailand and utilizing every phase and form of psychological warfare to prepare the minds and emotions of the people to collaborate in the effort; that this support must relate to synchronized 25X1
 efforts including extensive para-military operations. 25X1

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6. That a coordinated political effort to bring French policy towards Indochina more in accord with the realities of the situation must be considered a major factor in the overall effectiveness of the resistance effort based in Thailand, while expanded U. S. programs for strengthening Thailand could assist in making this effort more effective.

7. That the proposed expansion of U. S. activities based on Thailand is feasible in the light of that country's capabilities, providing emphasis is placed initially on reducing Thailand's vulnerabilities.

Consequently programs should be aimed at strengthening Thailand's ability to resist communist aggression or subversion, with only such necessary supporting programs in the information field in adjacent areas as are consistent with the existing patterns of inter-Allied relationships.

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY PLAN

1. National Policy:

The overall objective of U. S. policy in respect to Southeast Asia is stated in NSC 124/2 as: "preventing the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into the communist orbit, and to assist them to develop the will and ability to resist communism from within and without and to contribute to the strengthening of the free world."

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2. In coordination with U. S. military programs consolidate Thailand as a secure base by increasing its strength and making its frontiers more defensible.

a. Psychological Objectives:

(1) Stimulate, crystallize, maintain, and coordinate active resistance, in the first instance in Thailand, to communist aggression, subversion, and oppression mainly by:

(a) convincing them that the U. S. is determined to assist them in their resistance to communism;

(b) developing confidence in their own capabilities for effective resistance to communism.

(2) Throughout all of Southeast Asia maximize the favorable aspects, and minimize any unfavorable aspect, of U. S. support to Thailand by:

(a) building up the conviction that communist strategy in respect to the Thai peoples of Southeast Asia imperils all of Southeast Asia;

(b) increasing the belief that U. S. support in Southeast Asia will facilitate the solution of major political and economic problems in the area -- including rural development and land reform -- in a manner satisfactory both to Asian and to western interests, without any taint of disguised U. S. colonial aspirations.

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(3) Encourage and strengthen all feasible cooperation among the countries of Southeast Asia with each other and with the British and French, and of both the former and the latter with the U. S.*

b. Basic Tasks:

(1) Wherever possible in cooperation with the Thai government and making use chiefly of indigenous outlets, develop or expand U. S. overt information programs directed to Southeast Asia, with initial emphasis on those aimed at Thailand and other Thai ethnic groups which:

(a) make clear the active partnership of the U. S. in the struggle of the peoples of Southeast Asia to preserve their freedom and cultural integrity and to realize their legitimate national aspirations;

(b) seek to convince all the peoples of Southeast Asia that the communist threat to Laos and Thailand imperils the entire area, and that without an effective counter-effort the free or emergent nations of Southeast Asia will fall under the yoke of Red Chinese imperialism;

(c) through emphasis on communist vulnerabilities (e.g. to aggressive guerrilla action) seek to increase the confidence of the free peoples of Asia that with Free World assistance, they are not and will not be helpless in the face of the communist threat;

* European support for U. S. national purposes in Southeast Asia should be developed within the scope of the Psychological Strategy Plan for Western Europe (FSB D-38 as approved).

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(d) publicize and effectively exploit any concrete illustrations of constructive policies or achievements initiated by the U. S. or other nations, western or indigenous, in line with the objectives of paragraphs 2.a.(2) and (3).

Action: State

[REDACTED]

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(2) Stimulate and support effective overt [REDACTED] information activities of the Thai Government in support of objectives compatible with those in paragraph 2.a.

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Action: State (See Appendix A)

(3) Develop, expand, or intensify [REDACTED]

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U. S. activities in support of all of the objectives in paragraph 2, with particular emphasis upon the following:

(a) winning the support of the nationalist-ically-oriented indigenous elite for the constructive and increasingly active role of the U. S. in the area:

(b) exploiting the support thus obtained to stimulate more active opposition to communism;

(c) neutralizing communist influence and sympathy in the overseas Chinese communities, wherever possible developing support for free world objectives.

Action: (See Appendix A)

(4) Develop, expand, and accelerate to the greatest extent sound programs for the creation and employment of indigenous guerrilla and para-military forces, capable of effective active defense against communist invasion and infiltration of Thailand.

Action: (See Appendix A)

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(5) Maintain at least at the present scale, and possibly increase beyond the FY '52 and FY '53 level, the economic aid and technical assistance program, with special emphasis on projects which:

- (a) illustrate the interest of the U. S. in the welfare of the indigenous peoples (rural development and health projects);
- (b) support military objectives (improvement of strategic roads and railroads);
- (c) aid the development of the strategically exposed, economically depressed Northeastern provinces.

Action: MSA

(6) Strengthen and make obligatory educational courses for all official U. S. personnel, designed to give them a background of the history, culture and languages within which they will work in Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. Such instruction and indoctrination as is given in the U. S. should be supplemented by continuing formal and informal programs in the area, wherever possible utilizing the services of local people who have had travel or other grants from U. S. agencies. Language teaching should be encouraged. All these programs should be aimed at obtaining a maximum favorable psychological impact from the activities and local contacts of all official U. S. personnel.

Action: State
Defense
MSA

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(7) Strengthen orientation programs for indigenous military personnel, and suitable information programs for the general public, which, taking into account local cultural attitudes:

(a) stress U. S. respect for the human value and military capacity of the indigenous peoples;

(b) inspire confidence in available U. S. equipment, of U. S. military leaders, and of U. S. training methods and concepts of warfare over those of the communists;

(c) indoctrinate indigenous trainees for PW Program.

Action: State
Defense

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(8) Tactfully, and on a realistic basis, induce the Thai Government to carry out measures intended to reduce Thai vulnerabilities to communist subversion, and at the same time, by all suitable means combat present or potential communist influence upon former opposition leaders.

Action: State (See Appendix A)

c. Special Undertakings:

(1) Department of State:

(a) Strengthen the existing USIS program in Thailand by:

assigning to Bangkok, at the time of the appointment of the new U. S. Ambassador, a Public Affairs Officer of the highest calibre;

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expediting the assignment of a Thai language officer to the vacant position in Bangkok;

turning over to the Thai Government the USIS launch "AMERICA" for its operation, on the understanding that it will use certain agreed American USIS material;

arranging for increased funds for local publications in the Chinese language programs;

arranging increased funds, and, as necessary, additional staff, to build up local USIS radio programs and locally-produced films;

providing for more leader and specialist travel grants, and, if required, additional staff to handle the important Exchange of Persons Program and the Bi-National Institute Program in Bangkok;

utilizing to the maximum extent visual aids as a means of reaching people otherwise untouched by U. S. media.

(b) Explore the feasibility and desirability of setting up under indigenous control a mobile radio transmitter at or near the Thai-Laos frontier.

(c) Intensify information activities in northeast Thailand.

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(d) In conjunction with the appointment of a new U. S. Ambassador to Thailand, assign the best qualified officer available for a thorough survey of the unofficial attitudes and aspirations of the Thai and other indigenous peoples as they affect the implementation of this strategy. Recommendations for modifications of approach, emphasis, timing, etc., should be his main objective.

(e) Request the Chinese Nationalist Government in Formosa to assign a more effective diplomatic representative to Thailand, if reports on the ineffectiveness of the present charge d'affaires are accurate.

(f) Continue the Thai language broadcasts on VOA, unless it is found that better use can be made of existing personnel and organization.

(g) Promote regional inter-Asian exchange of persons, with emphasis on the exploitation of selected Chinese intellectuals from Hong Kong; the exchange of younger businessmen, already started should be intensified.

(2) Department of Defense:

(a) Stage, as soon as possible, a show of U. S. air strength in Bangkok. This should be done after consultation with the local Mission as to timing, and as to whether it should be undertaken by the United States alone or possibly with the British and French.

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(b) Attach to MAAG a suitably qualified psywar officer to establish close relation with the Psychological Warfare Section of the Thai Department of Defense, and to cooperate with other U. S. information personnel.

(c) Effect pre-arranged coordination and timing of air or naval courtesy visits with overt ☐

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☐ PW agencies to insure full PW exploitations.

(3) Mutual Security Agency:

(a) Determine the effect and influence of U. S. private enterprise (business, missionary, foundations) and both exploit wherever possible their favorable aspects and minimize conflicts with them arising out of governmental operations.

(b) Promote in the United States cultural, handicraft, and other exhibitions, in cooperation with the local governments, with appropriate publicity linking their popular appeal with indigenous aspirations, local conditions, anti-communist objectives, etc.

(c) Continue with a high priority economic programs in support of the objectives of this strategy.

4. Implementation

The standard provisions for coordination, review, evaluation, and logistic support will apply to this Plan, with the special provision that agency arrangements to implement the specific provisions of the Plan shall be completed and coordinated as a matter of urgency not later than one month after the date of PSB promulgation.

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